NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

CORRESPONDENCE FROM ENGLAND.

LONDON, MARCH 24, 1847.

Although I find myself, once more, in this vast concentration of people, business, wealth, and of every other element which enters into the composition of English society, I do not, *therefore*, feel myself better qualified to discuss the nature or the peculiar characteristics of that society. It is true I am surrounded by all the *materials* from which a correct estimate of English society in the mass and peculiarity in individual character may be formed, but it requires the aid of cool reflection, and the quietness of the country, to arrange those materials so that others may get a correct idea of that which is intended to be represented.

A stranger, passing through the bustling streets of ever-crowded London, viewing the anxious care-worn visages of the jostling streams of pedestrians, and the display of goods of every description which are spread out in every window to allure purchasers, would say that the great end, aim, and intent of the people is business, profit, gain: that in fact the people of England, so far as London represents them, are a nation of traffickers, merchants, shopkeepers, hawkers, and pedlars. I will not, at present, either agree with or dissent from this conclusion; much may be said on both sides: at present I am a good deal inclined to the affirmative: I will return to the subject hereafter.

The distress in Ireland still occupies the foremost place in the public mind, and in the discussions of Parliament. I am afraid that want and famine have not yet materially diminished in the sister island. The county of Sligo seems to be one of the most afflicted districts. The sympathy of our American brethren has called forth very marked expressions of satisfaction and gratitude in every quarter, and very particularly so from Lord John Russell in the House of Commons, and in the columns of the Times. The noble sentiments uttered by Mr. Everett at Faneuil Hall, and the very excellent resolutions moved by Mr. Webster at Washington, have been extracted into, and commented upon, with great feeling and gratification, in the principal London and provincial journals. This exhibition of kind feeling will do much, and has already done much, to diminish prejudice, and to bring about that perfect cordiality and good feeling which the real interests of the world at large require should exist between the United States and England.

The continent of Europe continues to suffer much from a scarcity of food. In France the price of bread is every day increasing, and the wages of the operative diminishing: the wants of the famishing people are driving them to acts of open violence, and in the neighborhood of Lyons placards have been posted, containing the most horrid threats, and breathing nothing but outrage, rapine, and bloodshed. The Government and the local municipalities are doing all within their power to diminish the sufferings of the people. A *carte blanche* has been given by the Government to its agents in England to purchase all the flour that can be obtained there; an enormous quantity has been purchased in Spain for France.

In Belgium the distress of the people has driven them to acts of riot and insubordination, and the military has been called out in more than one instance. Disturbances have taken place at Bruges, Liege, and other places. Great distress also exists in various parts of Germany, particularly in Hungary, where a great part of the population, in some districts, are represented as being entirely without the means of subsistence. Notwithstanding all this distress and scarcity, the corn market, not only in Mark Lane and in Liverpool, but also in Cork, has fallen in price, particularly in Indian corn. This has no doubt been occasioned by the rumors of the large quantities both of maize and wheat which may be expected from the United States on the opening of the rivers and canals. This fall in price has also been aided by the accounts of the approaching harvest in Egypt, which promises to be very productive. In Upper Egypt the crop will be ripe at the end of this month. A large portion of the crop of 1846 is yet available for exportation, and eighteen vessels were (February 16) loading at Alexandria for Marseilles alone; and seventeen for the same port at Smyrna.

The Parliament of England has become aware of the importance of correct statistical information with respect to agricultural produce, which, strange to say, has been hitherto very much neglected, and a measure is now under consideration providing for obtaining regular returns of land cultivated and produce raised. I have been laughed at for saying that in the United States a statement sufficiently accurate for practical purposes was annually obtained, and told that since the thing could not be done in England, notwithstanding the comparative smallness of the territory, the compactness of the population, and the perfection of the governmental machinery, it was worse than folly to suppose that it could be done in the immense territory, sparse population, and loose and lax means and mode of obtaining it which must consequently prevail in the United States. I have never vouched for, because I never believed in, the *absolute perfection and correctness* of the Patent Office annual reports, but I have always thought that they displayed a degree of industry and judgment, directed towards a most important object, which was highly praiseworthy and beneficial. And here let me mention that a parcel of agricultural and horticultural seeds with which I was entrusted by the Patent Office has excited great interest in the quarters where I have distributed them. Whenever the proper season has occurred they have been sown with great care, and the results will be carefully noted and reported. This may seem to be a small business, but I do seriously believe that great advantage, in the way of the promotion of kind and good feelings, would arise from an interchange of agricultural seeds and grain; and I shall lose no opportunity in promoting it. Cannot you aid me in your neighborhood, by application to your agricultural friends?

Now for the wearisome subject of politics. And first as to the domestic affairs, agitations, consultations, and prospects of Great Britain. Parliament has now been in session more than three months. Many important measures are in progress, but few have yet been perfected. The public mind is, at this time, most agitated upon the subject of general education, in respect to its being a legitimate and proper object of governmental interference.

Strange to say, the great bulk of the dissenters assert that Government has *no right* to interfere in the matter; that it is altogether and entirely a subject to be left to the people, and to be promoted and attended to by them *voluntarily*, in their individual capacity, where parents and the natural guardians of children are unable to do so. If you ask these opponents of governmental assistance whether this voluntary and individual aid has yet been, or is now, adequate to this end, they will admit that it is not, but say that it is every day becoming more and more so, and that they would rather suffer the temporary deficiency than accept the aid to be given by the Government, viewing such aid with great jealousy, on account of the connexion of *Church* and *State*, and dreading the power which the *former* may obtain by allowing the co-operation of the *latter* in the business of education. I am not polemic enough to enter into the question how far the plan proposed by the Government may forward the views and increase the powers of the established church. Let the dissenters look to this and guard against it; but I deny *in toto* the broad principle which the dissenters assert as the very *basis* of their opposition to the measure—that Government, as such, has no right to interfere with, or to assist in, the business of education. It appears to me to be one of the most essential duties of a good Government to attend to and provide for this very object. And it is from this parental character that some of the State Governments of the United States derive and possess, in my estimation, their greatest glory. This education question will, however, I am afraid, be a powerful engine in operation at the approaching general election. The dissenters will, if their present feeling continues, be opposed to the Whig administration, and how far their weight and influence, abstracted from one scale and thrown into the other, may tend to its defeat, is a very serious question.

The existing Administration is attacked by many of the leading public journals, and the accusation is responded to by part of the people, as being inconsistent in its course in having come into power as the avowed advocates of *free trade* in its widest and fullest extent, and yet having given its sanction to a measure regulating the *duration of labor* in factories, which trenches upon *free trade* in one of its most vital operations, the right of a man to labor for as many hours as he pleases, seeing that the labor of an adult person in a factory must be regulated by his own free will. One bad effect must unavoidably arise, and that is the reduction of the wages of the operative; for, if he labors *one-sixth* less in time, he will, of course, be paid only for the remaining *five-sixths*. Another serious question is, how far this reduction of labor, and consequently of production, will affect the manufacturing interests of the country? The "Economist," weekly journal—and a very powerful and influential one it is—seems to apprehend the downfall of Lord John Russell from his advocacy of this factory bill, and charges him with having "become the defender of '*class* legislation, founded on calculations of pecuniary gain, and of legislative restrictions on industry." Douglas Jerrold, on the contrary, sums up a very able article by saying: "The whole dispute may be shortly stated: The mill-owners—the opponents of the measure—care only for the productions of man; Lord John Russell for man himself."

The discussions which have arisen on the question of extending the poor laws to Ireland have opened again the whole question as to their beneficial results in England, in their present mode of administration. It appears to be admitted very generally that the great and very searching reform which took place in the English poor-law system in 1834 has neither diminished the expense nor raised the condition of the laboring classes so much as was expected. This failure of the new law has given poignancy to all the objections that were originally started against the measure, as hard-hearted, and as intended to spare the pockets of the rich and starve the poor, and has to a considerable extent confirmed the general opinion previously existing that all such systems of relief are inherently injurious and degrading, as tending to rob a man of a proper dependence upon his own exertions, and of his self-respect. This is, however, not the opinion of the poor themselves; they are continually crying out for *more* help, for a *further extension* of the poor law system, and for additional protection against the abuses of the guardians and other officers appointed to administer the poor laws: and loud and incessant are the demands for a poor law for Ireland. The Ministers and the Parliament have yielded to these demands, and a poor law, with out-door relief, is about passing as a *permanent remedy* for Irish distress. The policy of this extension of a poor law to Ireland is much doubted, and you will see the arguments *pro* and *con* in the parliamentary debates. The condition of Ireland is so perfectly *sui generis* that no *general* argument can be founded upon it, and the discussion of that condition would fill more than one of your daily sheets. But take the following general statistics as applicable to this poor-law question. Ireland, with *one-half* of the population of England, has only *one-fifth* of the means of supporting her poor. The ratable property in Ireland is about £13,000,000; that of England is more than £62,000,000. This great distinction between the two countries makes a poor law like that of England extremely inapplicable to Ireland; and a law which the great wealth of England, increasing faster than its population, has enabled her to bear, would amount to a permanent confiscation of nearly half the rent of Ireland. Such a law will, in every respect, be injurious to the Irish. Instead of learning to help themselves by honest industry, they will at once be taught to rely on the rates for support. Now is the time for teaching them the former lesson: the PROPER *mode* of doing it is a question which would puzzle the wisest legislator of the age, but there are very few who have thought much about the question who will say that the *introduction of the poor laws is* that proper mode. The *Irish landlords* do not object to a poor law, however; they only object to bear the burden of it; they do not quarrel with the tax, provided England will bear it. And the poor law which they want is a continuance of the present parliamentary assistance, which is in fact a monster poor law extraordinary, at the expense of the British public. The objection made by the Irish members is to this poor law *extraordinary* being converted into an *ordinary* poor law—the expense of it to be borne by the country where the poor who are to be relieved by it reside.

In the mean time suffering continues in Ireland, and the natural consequence is that discontent increases. Fire-arms are publicly sold in the streets of the towns and at auctions, where the auctioneers indulge very freely in their observations as to the uses to which they may be put "in giving receipts for rent," or in "settling with an agent at 150 yards distance," &c. Emigration is going on with increased numbers from Ireland. The streets and quays of Dublin are filled with persons, chiefly of the comfortable class of farmers. Several landlords are affording every facility to their tenantry, either by small grants of money for present use, or by providing them with a free passage to whatever quarter they wish to emigrate. Whilst on the subject of emigration it may be observed that "emigration to the United States" has lately been discussed at considerable length and with some ability in Douglas Jerrold's weekly newspaper. The removal of one million of poor persons is recommended, at an expense of five pounds each, (less than the annual expense of maintaining them at home,) as a matter of economy as well as one of very great philanthropy. The formation of an emigration company is recommended, who should buy 100, 500, or 1,000 sections of public land, and resell small parcels thereof—say twenty to a hundred acres each—to poor persons at *Government prices*; reserving eighty acres out of each section, to be sold at the advanced price which it would be worth when the remainder of the section was settled and cleared, and thus reimburse the company. Agents for the company to be stationed at New York to forward emigrants at once to the settlement, where necessary accommodations for their reception should be provided; and other agents qualified to direct the emigrants in the commencement of their labors.

In some parts of Germany the disposition for emigration has spread widely among the people. From one place, Egelsbach in Hesse, the whole population (about 1,400) signed a petition to Government for leave to emigrate, to which no answer was returned. Similar reports of an impulse to emigration come from Westphalia. In one place, Bocholt, more than a fourth part of the population have resolved to emigrate. The British Government do not intend to take up and encourage any *general* plan of emigration, but some emigrants from the most destitute places will be forwarded at the cost of the Treasury to Quebec.

England and France appear to have taken some decided steps towards a renewal of the *entente cordiale*. Lord Normanby and M. Guizot have shook hands and dined together, two rather significant ceremonies, particularly the latter. The defeat of the French Ministers in the election of the Vice President of the Chamber is not regarded as any thing important. It affects no question of principle or policy. M. Guizot is, at this moment, so far as a looker-on can judge, firmer fixed in power than he has ever been before during the last twelve months. The sudden act of kindness on the part of Russia towards France in advancing the Bank of France fifty millions of francs, filled London with wonderment and surprise; the proceeding was at first regarded as political, and not commercial on the part of Russia. France was said to have manifested an undue preference to Russian politics, and it was even said that this was the price which she was to receive for her acquiescence in the seizure of Cracow, &c. The most probable solution of the difficulty is, that the Cabinet of St. Petersburgh has placed the funds at the disposition of the Bank of France, for the purpose of enabling it to pay for Russian corn. The granaries of Russia are known to be full, and the policy of the Emperor Nicholas evidently is, that this surplus should find a market before the *American* supplies reach Europe, and under any circumstances that it should not remain unsold. The transaction has, most likely, no political bearings whatever. The subject, however, may be deserving the consideration of the holders of and speculators in grain on your side of the Atlantic. Again, France has been accused of entertaining schemes of colonial aggrandizement, which she hopes to realize through her matrimonial alliance with Spain; the Balearic Isles were to be ceded to her, and great power thereby accrue to her in the Mediterranean, fatal to the interests of Great Britain. This rumor, however, appears from the Government statements to be entirely unfounded. There appears to be a class of alarmists in this country who are continually catching at political straws, from which to manufacture some cause of quarrel between the two countries. But this is not peculiar to England.

MARCH 29.—Spain appears to be destined to perpetual trouble. The young Queen of Spain has since her marriage shown a great aversion to her mother, whom she blames for having, in league with Louis Philippe, sacrificed her happiness in marrying her to a man whom she detests and depises. The royal husband appears to agree with his wife in only one sentiment—a violent anger against the parties who brought about the marriage. A divorce *de facto* exists between the royal pair. The departure of the Queen Mother for Paris had excited great rejoicings in Madrid, and it is hoped by many that she will never return to Spain. A large deficency, amounting to several millions sterling, has been discovered in the Treasury, and Queen Christina is supposed to have been concerned in producing it. Another ministerial crisis, as it is called, has taken place at Madrid. This is not to be wondered at, subject as the Ministry has been to the caprices of the youthful Isabella, who, the more she hates her husband, seems to become the less regardful of her character. The Paris *National* says "There are 'strange matters passing in Madrid, but how can 'we relate them? How translate into decent language stories which are not so?" The young Queen is charged with having suffered her affections to stray in favor of a young officer, Gen. Serrano; she wished to place him at the head of a new administration. This, however, she has been defeated in. The King objects to the irregularities of his wife, and jointly with the Ministry used his endeavors to remove Serrano from Madrid by offering him the Viceroyalty of Navarre. This arrangement the Queen refused to agree to; a scene of unusual violence is said to have taken place at the palace, leading to a meeting of the Ministers and a decision that Serrano should instantly start for Pampeluna or leave the country entirely. The thing most to be dreaded is, that, in the present state of affairs in Spain, means may be taken to *remove* the Queen, and that her sister the Duchess of Montpensier (Louis Philippe's daughter-in-law) should ascend the Spanish throne, reviving all the old discussions about the balance of power, the breach of the treaty of Utrecht, and other *really* non-essential figments, but which too often prove the pivots upon which the peace of the world is made to hang.

The press is making rapid strides in the States of the Church. A new journal has lately appeared in Bologna. Austria is exerting herself to procure a general censorship of the press throughout Italy. The Pope has accredited an agent in China, charged with the interests of the Catholic subjects of the Celestial Empire. He has also instituted most important inquiries into the state of agriculture in his dominions, and has given the landholders notice that he will no longer tolerate individual neglect in leaving so large a portion of the soil uncultivated and so many of the peasantry unemployed. He has informed the land-owners that he shall keep a vigilant eye on the management of their estates, and that if he finds laborers in want of work on their land, he shall find occupation for them at the expense of the proprietors, and has astonished the feudal lords with a declaration that *duties* as well as *rights* form part of their landed inheritance. Great dissatisfaction with their Austrian rulers exists in Pisa and other parts of Italy.

Frederick Douglas, who *called himself* a runaway slave from Maryland, and who worked upon public sympathy so far as to have several hundreds of dollars raised, by which his freedom was *said* to be purchased, is about to return to America, and a *farewell soirée* is to be given to him, "as a testimony of the public appreciation of his noble exertions on behalf of his enslaved race in the Southern States of America." This soirée is to be held at the London Tavern, on Tuesday next; tickets, including refreshments, 2s. 6d. each: Geo. Thompson, Esq. in the chair, and members of Parliament, aldermen, reverend doctors, and literary men of note are to lend their names and authorities to the affair. There is no doubt but that this Frederick Douglas is a shrewd man, of very considerable talent and address, and he has led a very comfortable life here, and been made quite a lion of. His success will lead to a crowd of imitators.

A day of fasting and humiliation was ordered by the Queen in Council to be observed on Wednesday last, 24th March. The Examiner pointedly observed upon the subject that, if the Deity was so displeased with the conduct of the people as to send a famine among them, it was arrogant to suppose that one day of fasting and supplication, passed as such days generally are, was sufficient to propitiate him. The day was hailed and treated as a holyday by all who could afford to keep it in that way. The churches of the Establishment were opened and filled with crowds of listeners to very drowsy, arrogant, and presumptuous sermons. It is a question whether any less amount of eating and drinking was done, for Douglas Jerrold says the butchers and bakers were busy on Tuesday morning serving out *double* quantities to their customers, as there would be no shops open on Wednesday. If public feeling and general comment are to guide future proceedings, I think there is a strong indication that no more public fasts will be ordered as a means of averting Divine displeasure. The Quakers and the greater part of the Dissenters took no notice of the order; their chapels were all closed. Douglas Jerrold states, in his weekly journal of the 27th, under the head of "Police:"

"WORSHIP STREET.—On Thursday the attention of the court was occupied nearly the whole of the forenoon in disposing of *drunken charges and rows consequent upon the observance of the fast*, which were unquestionably *far greater in number* than are usually brought to this court, even at those periods of the year when our *greatest festivals* are held." [The *italics* are mine.]

THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC.

FROM THE PHILADELPHIA SPIRIT OF THE TIMES.

The following letter from the Vice President of the United States, addressed to a gentleman of this city, is on a most interesting subject, and we solicit for it an attentive and thoughtful perusal:

WASHINGTON, MARCH 16, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR: I am not surprised that you have been attracted by the hints and paragraphs which have appeared in the newspapers; and only regret that, in answering your inquiries as fully as you insist upon, I shall be obliged to make a pretty large draught on your patience. The truth is, the subject is not one which can be satisfactorily handled by mere generalities; and, in order to meet your desire and expectations, I have been obliged to examine it with somewhat more care than heretofore. It has expanded under this process until I am quite sure I shall be tedious in following it out to you.

The war with Mexico should be turned to good account. It may be made to produce consequences far more important than the mere acquisition of territory. If properly ended, it must lead to an almost boundless enlargement of our commerce to new channels and spheres of trade, and to great markets for our produce and manufactures. The American people, by a single and energetic movement of their Government, can soon be placed in the van of all competition in securing the peace, accumulating the wealth, and extending the civilization of the world.

Such results do not generally flow from wars. Military glory, vindicated honor, present power and security, and, perhaps, widened limits are the best effects usually expected. It is true these are valuable; but the attainment of what I have referred to would overshadow them in magnitude and permanency.

It would seem to be understood that one of the objects at which the Government will aim when negotiating a peace with Mexico, is the purchase of so much soil, or the concession of so much irrevocable jurisdiction, as may enable us to unite by a canal or railway the Atlantic and Pacific oceans on the Isthmus Tehuantepec. And this, I conceive, if promptly and vigorously carried out, must be followed by consequences whose vastness and beneficence cannot be easily exaggerated. The subject is of extreme interest, and deserves to be universally as well as accurately appreciated. I will, therefore, make some remarks and compile some facts in illustration of it; and I do so as rapidly as more imperative engagements will allow, because I am deeply impressed with the conviction that this Mexican war (which may possibly be brought to an early close) offers the golden opportunity, which, if neglected, may never return.

To abridge the tedious and dangerous voyage round Cape Horn, and give to navigation a direct and safe access to the eastern shores of the Pacific, has been a favorite scheme for centuries of scientific exploration and of mercantile hope. For a long time its practicability at any point was disputed. The best inquiries left it in doubt. Every narrow portion of the continent of America has undergone examination; has, for a while, been regarded with preference, and has again been abandoned. Difficulties sprang up as to each, and a comparison of their relative advantages, affected more or less by the desire of the respective engineers and explorers to render the junction of the two seas specially serviceable to their own countries, excited apprehensions as to all. Still I am abundantly satisfied that the project is not only practicable, but practicable, under the joint auspices of the United States and Mexico, at a moderate cost and within a short time.

Five routes for crossing have attracted special notice. 1. *By the isthmus of Panama.* 2. *By the isthmus of Darien.* 3. *By the lake of Nicaragua.* 4. *By the river Atrato, from the gulf of Darien*, running south through Choco, in New Grenada, until it nearly meets the San Juan, which empties itself into the Pacific at the port of Charambiro. And 5. *By the isthmus of Tehuantepec.* Of these routes it may in general be said that the one across the isthmus of Panama and the one by the lake of Nicaragua have been heretofore best explored and most approved. In 1805 Baron Humboldt, who enumerated four additional routes, was discouraged as to that by Panama, because "*no measure of elevation and no level had ever yet been executed in that isthmus;*" and from all the information he could procure, it appeared to him that the expectation of a ship channel by canal across that isthmus "*ought to be completely abandoned.*" Since that period, however, the topography of the region has been carefully and closely investigated. Steam power and railways have become adjunctive elements for calculation and arrangement, and conclusions much more favorable, as well as better founded, may now be drawn. In 1825 a well-reasoned but still imperfect judgment in favor of the Panama route was published, and several others have since appeared; but the last and far the most impressive is in a Parisian pamphlet purporting to be an abstract of a report made to Mr. Guizot, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, by Napoleon Garreli, engineer in chief attached to the royal mining corps in 1845, and to set out a "*project for uniting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans by a canal across the isthmus of Panama.*" In 1829, G. A. Thompson, a diplomatic agent of the British Government, published his "*Official Visit to Guatemala;*" and he therein describes the route by the lake of Nicaragua, and the various steps which had been taken (in 1825) as well by the King of the Netherlands as by great banking houses in England, with the legislative sanction and aid of the local Government, to form a navigable communication between the two oceans by means of that lake and the river San Juan. This mode of effecting the object has commended itself, after critical scrutiny, to many others, and seems to be somewhat favored by P. Campbell Scarlett, a British traveller, in his lively work on "South America and the Pacific," printed in 1838.

You cannot, however, be benefited by my considering further or minutely the facilities or difficulties of the Panama and Nicaragua routes. Whatever may be the superiority of their advantages, we are not in such a relation to them as can make it of the slightest practical use to enter elaborately into their development. Let me fix your attention exclusively on the route by the isthmus of Tehuantepec—a route which, if practicable, on almost any terms, must recommend itself over all others, by being, as it were, at the very outlets of our estuaries, or on our commercial threshold.

This route runs through Mexican territory. It commences at the mouth of a river called the Huasacualco, emptying itself into the southern section of the Gulf of Mexico: it thence takes a generally southern and western direction until it reaches Tarifa, at which town a canal or railroad begins; and the route with it continues in the same course to western lakes, which then furnish a direct highway to the river, the city, and the Gulf of Tehuantepec on the Pacific. The topography of this isthmus has been investigated with some care; it might, indeed, be unwise to begin practical operations without a fresh and thorough survey; but enough is known to render it quite certain that the communication can be opened without unreasonable expenditure of labor or money.

The width of the isthmus, from the mouth of the Huasacualco on the Mexican gulf to the shores of the Pacific at Tehuantepec, is about one hundred and thirty-five miles. The central mountainous chain, which, conformably to its relative position throughout both Americas, is much nearer to the Pacific than to the Atlantic ocean, exhibits here a depression which continues from *Santa Maria Patapa* to *Miguel de Chimalapa*: for a distance of about twenty-five miles a summit-level or plain is formed whose streams flow north, and whose boundaries at the south and southeast are a chain of small hills called *Cerros* (highlands) *of Masalma*, and of *Espinosa*, which separate the waters flowing north from those flowing south, and between which, here and there, are passages, such as the *Portillo* (gate) *of Chirola*, and the *Portillo of Tarifa*. Streams starting from this space of depression in the great mountainous ridge, and running *north*, empty themselves in the Huasacualco; those running *south* empty themselves in the Chicapa, which in turn discharges itself into the lakes east of Tehuantepec; and it is one or both of these rivers—Huasacualco and Chicapa—which may be employed in effecting the transit across the Isthmus, by uniting them either by a canal, a railway, or a good macadamized road.

This route for the junction was pointed out by Fernando Cortez, the conqueror, as long ago as the year 1520. Indeed, all the three principal routes to which we have referred—Panama, Nicaragua, and Tehuantepec—were designated by Lopez de Gomarra in his history of the Indies, as early as A. D. 1551; and it is worthy of remark, that these three routes are the only ones which, after the lapse of three centuries and many explorations, present the least promise for the construction of a ship canal.

For more than two centuries the hope of effecting a navigable communication between the ocean seems to have been wholly abandoned. At the close of the last century, however, this old project of uniting the Huasacualco with Tehuantepec, in Mexico, revived; and Augustin Cramer, after making some researches in 1774, under the orders of Viceroy Bucareli, proposed to carry it into effect by a canal, fed from two small tributaries of the Huasacualco. More recently, the General Government of Mexico, in 1825, authorized General Orbegozo to explore this route; but that officer, misled by the defect of the only barometer he had with him, came to the conclusion that the construction of a canal there was a work almost impracticable, and restricted himself to recommending a good road. At last, in 1842, Joseph de Garay, having obtained, by legislative desire, the privilege of making a communication between the two oceans across this isthmus, established a board of commissioners under the direction of an engineer, Gayetano Moro, with instructions to give the isthmus a thorough scientific exploration. Moro published his labors and their results in 1844; and, as the information he gives is certainly the latest and most authentic, it may be agreeable to you to have it set forth briefly.

The village of Tarifa, which gives its name to the plain at the depression of the central chain of mountains to which we have referred, is seated about 700 feet above the level of the sea; the plain itself is somewhat lower. The hills which bound the plain on the south and southeast, and divide it from the waters flowing south, have but little elevation; and a cut of some fifty or a hundred yards in length would alone be sufficient to enable some of the streams on the plain to run south by the *Portillo* (gate) of *Tarifa*. One of these hills, the *Del Convento*, in which the *Rio Monetza* takes its rise, and thence flows into the Chicapa at San Miguel, stands alone, and on two of its sides, particularly at the north, are clefts so sunken that a cut through them would be a work of extreme ease. The direct distance between Tarifa and the river Bocabarra, through which the lakes on the western side of the isthmus reach the Pacific, is about thirty-seven miles. On the southern declivity, the principal streams are the Rio Ostuta and the Rio Chicapa, both of which empty themselves in the lakes, the latter about eighteen miles from the Bocabarra and nineteen miles from Tarifa. All the streams on the northern declivity flow into the Huasacualco, and that river, after a very winding course, reaches the Gulf of Mexico, about one hundred and five miles from Tarifa. One of its chief tributaries is the Malatengo, which flows into it on its left bank about ninety direct miles from its mouth, or one hundred and sixty miles following its circuitous bed. The Chicapa, gauged above San Miguel Chimalapa, by combining several rivulets flowing from the central chin, rolls a body of water estimated at about twenty-two cubic feet per second. The Ostuta is in volume five or six times larger, and, which is really remarkable, and indicates extreme thirstiness of soil, this volume of water diminishes as it lengthens its distance from its original source.

The volume of water in the Huasacualco is great; and at the lower part of its course it would be navigable for ships of any size, were it not for the bar at its mouth. The depth of water upon this bar has been, at different times, ascertained to be: By Dampier fourteen feet, by Cramer eighteen feet, by Orbegozo fourteen feet, by Robinson twenty feet, by Moro twenty feet. These differences are explainable, with great probability, by supposing the bar to be intersected by submarine canals or clefts, and the soundings not to have been made in the same one.

At about thirty-three miles from its mouth, near a place called La Horqueta, (the Fork,) the Huasacualco divides into two branches, the right and chief of which, the Apotzongo, runs a course of twenty-five miles, and the other, or left one, the Mistan, a course of about thirty-three miles—they encircle a large island called Tecamichapa. Below this island the depth of water always exceeds twenty-two feet, and becomes sometimes thirty-seven or thirty-eight feet. But above the reunion of the two branches there are shallows which it is thought may be got rid of by damming the Mistan at La Horqueta. Above this latter point the depth decreases: at some places it is found to be from twenty-five to thirty feet, but in general it is less than twenty-one, and even sinks to seven or four. Two points only, however, may be regarded as difficult to overcome—the old Mal-paso and the present Mal-paso—the first being between three and four miles below the confluence of the Malatengo with the Huasacualco, and the second between nine and ten miles below the first, at the confluence of the Rio Sarabria. At these two points the rocky character of the river's bed would make its deepening difficult.

On the other side of the isthmus, the Bocabarra, which constitutes the pathway between the Pacific ocean and the lakes or lagoons, into which flow the Chicapa and Ostuta, has a depth of about twenty-four feet; but its opening on the lakes is obstructed by a bar whose depth of water does not exceed nine feet. Moro ascribes the original formation of this bar in a great degree to the fact that formerly the river Tehuantepec emptied itself into the lake, and is of opinion that if it were removed by artificial contrivances the result would be permanent. He thinks that this removal might be accomplished by giving a direction to much of the water of the Ostuta above towards feeding the canal, and thus diminishing the force of the current in the lake. After passing the bar the depth increases; but throughout the eighteen miles or thereabouts, of distance from the bar to the mouth of the Chicapa, not more than nineteen feet of water are to be had, though modes of augmenting its depth could readily be found.

These minute details, translated and transferred from the French publication already mentioned, and whose accuracy I perceive no reason to doubt, are introduced here in order to show that the subject had not been lightly considered. They prove that the two principal obstacles to the creation of a ship channel across the isthmus are the BARS at the respective mouths of the Huasacualco and Bocabarra. Now, the bar at the mouth of the first of these rivers ceases to be an impediment as soon as its main submarine canal, over which twenty feet of water have been found, is fixed with accuracy and marked by lines of buoys; and the bar at the mouth of the other river, within the lake, is removable either in the manner suggested by Moro, or upon the plan heretofore successfully pursued, under the direction of our corps of topographical engineers, with bars at the entrances of our rivers from the northern lakes. Then, by surmounting the inferior obstacles—namely, the occasional shallowness of the Huasacualco and of the lake, either by sinking the bottoms or raising the water, and the short dividing swell of land between the source of the Rio Monetza running south into the Chicapa, and the source of any one of the streams running north into the Huasacualco—an uninterrupted water highway is effected. There does not, indeed, appear on the whole line of this route any difficulty which the present resources of our science and mechanical art may not vanquish.

We should all, perhaps, prefer a canal of large dimensions, fit to accommodate vessels of every size; and the expenditure for such a one, having reference to the route specially described, is estimated differently at from fifteen to twenty-five millions of dollars. These estimates are liberal, and are probably exaggerated by an imperfect knowledge of the local aids in the presence and cheapness of material and labor which would be furnished. Still, the highest valuation is, in contemplation of the purpose and its incalculable results, far from being appalling. But it may be that a canal much smaller, and, of course, less costly, would be attended by every substantial advantage; and, indeed, it is even easy to imagine that consequences very salutary and important might flow from leaving inducements to the construction of two free cities, one on the bank of the Huasacualco, and the other on the bank of the Bocabarra, or the Pacific, as *termini* to a railway. It will appear, from a careful consideration of the commerce which may be expected to direct its course through this passage, that the number of vessels of heavy tonnage and deep draught would bear a small proportion only to those of light tonnage and shallow draught; and, in all probability, the great additional expense incident as well to the construction as to the keeping up of a canal on the larger scale would not be repaid by corresponding advantages. The average burden of vessels from the United States to the ports on the Pacific, including the Sandwich Islands, to China, and on whaling voyages during the year 1845-'46, was short of 400 tons; and I should doubt whether, if this junction were effected, the burden of nineteen-twentieths of the craft passing through it would exceed that engaged in our coasting navigation. A canal adequate to the perfect accommodation of the great influx from our own country might, therefore, exact an outlay of but ten millions; and transshipments of large cargoes, though always more or less inconvenient, could be indemnified by the rapidity of transit by steam-power. It is hardly necessary to say that the American people, in the event of a speedy restoration of peace, will find themselves in circumstances of extraordinary prosperity, which will enable them to afford, out of the national treasury, to appropriate for five years five millions of dollars for the superior, or two millions for the inferior, order of canal.

Having given you this sufficiently precise description of the contemplated work, showing it to be practicable, and nothing repulsive in its probable cost, let me indulge in a few remarks of more general character, or rather hints for you to meditate upon.

The chief objects to be attained are, a speedy communication between this country and the western coasts of North and South America, especially with our Territories of Oregon and California; an easy and quick access to China, the groups of the South Sea Archipelago, the Sandwich Islands, Russian settlements, and even, before long I hope, the tempting and untouched treasures of magnificent Japan; and, finally, the facilitating and enlarging of that great source of wealth, as well as nursery of able seamen, the whale fishery.

Now, I cannot resist the impression that this junction of the two oceans at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec would Americanize this vast and augmenting portion of the commerce of the world. It would give to the people of the United States the overwhelming advantage of an abridgement by fully one-half of geographical distances. Against the merchants of Europe it would give ours two voyages to one. There is scarcely a region in the limitless South Sea with which a trade would be lucrative, that could not be reached by them in half the time that would be consumed by English, French, Spanish, Dutch, or Swedish navigators. "If," says Mr. Scarlett, "this scheme were realized, it has been calculated that the navigation from Philadelphia to Nootka Sound and the mouth of the Columbia river, which by Cape Horn is now 5,000 leagues, would be reduced to 3,000 only!" In fact, the reduction would be greater. But at this rate what would the reduction necessarily be as regards the navigation in that direction from New Orleans, Mobile, St. Augustine, Savannah, and our entire southern seaboard? The interchanges of commodities between our great and teeming valley of the West, and the rich and rising regions of the Pacific, would be accomplished almost at the mouth of the Mississippi.

Nor can securing, *in this way*, for our own country, the just benefits of her relative position be made the subject of complaint by other nations. We do not propose—at least I hope not—to monopolize the uses of the canal; on the contrary, it would be thrown open on terms, if not of equality and freedom, of the utmost liberality. Although an artificial structure, reared by the money and policy of our people, I would give it the unchangeable character of a public highway of nations. In effecting the cession of the Isthmus, therefore, by subdued Mexico, we need apprehend the jealousy of no Power worthy of notice. Sir P. Campbell Scarlett, in urging the British Government to undertake the Panama route, makes the following shrewd and correct remarks, the tone of which falls in very appropriately with my American view: "Could any other nation blame England for acquiring by the terms of such a treaty the possession of a narrow neck of land, for the sole purpose of rendering its extraordinary position beneficial to the world? Could Russia, whilst carrying on a war against innocent Circassians to advance her frontiers to the east? Could France, who, under color of resenting a national insult to her consular representative, is pushing her conquest in Morocco, and will probably, in the end, be appeased with nothing short of the dominion of all that vast territory lying between the pillars of Hercules and the confines of Egypt? North America is too wise to object to the completion of a design, no matter by what nation, which holds out to her a boundless prospect of future wealth."

Mexico herself would find in this work the quickening impulse and practical example which she had so long wanted, and with which she could not fail to rise rapidly in national power and prosperity. The noble idea of Cortez—quite as much the statesman as the warrior—has slumbered unimproved for more than three centuries; the spirit of enterprise, once so strong in the Spanish character, having yielded to the idleness of pride. The public means of Mexico, too, are miserably deficient, and, as well as her political instability, unfit her for the undertaking. While all her reflecting men would see that she would share largely in its blessings, she is unable to contribute for its accomplishment more than a narrow and at present valueless strip of land. But Mexico, in sober truth, should not, and I trust will not, be permitted to act the dog in the manger; to keep perversely and selfishly useless that which, without injury to her, may be converted into the means of bringing closely together, of improving, and of enriching the whole human family.

As to your inquiry whether the constitution presents any provision with which an appropriation of money by Congress to this purpose would be inconsistent, I say unhesitatingly that I can perceive none. If, as no one now-a-days disputes, we could purchase Louisiana and Florida, or might purchase Cuba or the navigation of the river St. Lawrence, so could we purchase Mexico; and being constitutionally competent to buy the whole, we can surely buy as much of it as may be wanted. As a mode of regulating commerce, the power may be considered to be an expressed one; and I am unable to see how the accidental circumstance of contiguity, or distance, in territory to be acquired, can affect the question in any manner.

Always sincerely yours,

J—— H——, jr. Esq. G. M. DALLAS.

WEST POINT ACADEMY.

Among the *ad captandum* subjects of Locofoco tirade and abuse, which the conservators of good order and good institutions have for years been obliged to discuss, against those who were bent on their destruction, that of the value and importance to the country of the United States MILITARY ACADEMY at West Point has been prominent. Originating, as that noble institution did, in the patriotic and far-sighted counsel and countenance of some of the best and soundest minds in the country, it was yet never allowed to escape the assaults of those who, for party purposes, found it convenient to denounce it as aristocratic in its origin and anti-republican in its tendencies. It was, moreover, attacked on the ground of its being an expensive establishment; and, at political meetings, on the stump, in the halls of local legislation, and on both floors of Congress, the abolition of this "federal" and "aristocratic" institution was put forward as one of the grand results which were to flow from "Democratic" ascendency. But, amidst all this, it had, as it deserved, its friends and supporters, who, until they saw that it was to be constantly and vigorously assaulted, until, by dint of perseverance, it might be made unpopular, yet saw around them so many palpable proofs of its usefulness and efficiency, and could not be easily made to believe that it could ever be successfully assailed. And when the last attempt was made to overthrow it, it is within the recollection of all how nobly they came up, in the halls of Congress, and protected it from the overthrow that seemed to be impending over it.

We have now, in the results of the late Mexican campaigns—in the stories of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Vera Cruz, Monterey, and Buena Vista—abundant proof of the high deserving of the Academy at West Point to be considered one of the best and most important of our national institutions. In each and every one of these memorable affairs the graduates of that school, as we have shown before, have been found foremost in the fight, among the most reliable in emergency, among the most deserving in the retrospect of every action. While, before the walls of Vera Cruz, occupying the point of danger, and therefore the point of honor, we see the gallant VINTON, cheerful and active in the midst of the worst and most imminent risks on that glorious field, stricken down in the gallant discharge of his duty, we cast our eye back upon the time when, not the son of a rich aristocrat, but of a widowed mother, he graduated, full of scholastic and military honors, from the United States Academy at West Point. And then, recurring to the field of Buena Vista, and seeing there the bravery and devotion of the gallant and lamented CLAY, we remember the day when his illustrious father pointed to the lofty highlands, between which and our noble river the Military Academy at West Point stands, and bade him remember that the spirits of Revolutionary patriots were looking down upon him from those heights, and watching his course as a student, in his country's service, there. We might greatly extend the list of those whose deeds, ever since this war commenced, have furnished the most fitting refutation of the vile partisan attacks it has been of late years considered so popular a point to make in certain quarters. But these instances, with what we have before given, will abundantly suffice.—*N. Y. Express.*

MINESOTA.

The Toledo Blade furnishes the following interesting sketch of this new Territory:

"It is bounded on the north by Canada West; on the east by Michigan and Wisconsin; on the south by the parallel of 43 degrees 30 minutes, which is the most northern line of Iowa; and on the west by the river Sioux and Red River of the North. The line separating Minesota from Michigan is in Lake Superior, and that separating it from Wisconsin passes along Lake Superior to the Falls of the St. Louis river, and thence south till it strikes the river St. Croix, which it follows to the Mississippi. Thence down the Mississippi to latitude 43½, the place of beginning.

"Embraced within these boundaries there are about 90,000 square miles—equal to 58,000,000 of acres. It is in nearly the same latitude as the State of Maine. In area it exceeds the Island of Great Britain, and it is nearly equal to France. Comparing it with old States, it is as large as New York and Pennsylvania. For the production of wheat and the grasses its soil and climate are favorable. Now, it appears to the people of the United States as extremely distant and interior. So did Wisconsin fifteen years ago. In commercial advantages, it will not be one of the most favored of the States, nor yet one of the least. By means of Lake Superior, on which it borders for more than one hundred miles, from Pigeon River to Fond du Lac, its northern and middle portion will have cheap communication with all the Lake shores, and the Atlantic, and through the Upper Mississippi and St. Peter's Rivers, will hold easy intercourse with the whole great valley below.

"Lake Superior affords abundance of good harbors, and the Mississippi offers fine navigation up to the Falls of St. Anthony, more than 100 miles above the southern boundary of Minesota.

"With the exception of its western portion, it is well watered by rivers and lakes. Its lake border is rich in metalliferous deposites.

"The most important points in Minesota, at present, and probably for all time to come, are Fond du Lac, at the western extremity of Lake Superior, and Fort Snelling, near the Falls of St. Anthony.

"With many, its cold climate will be an objection. It is pretty well north, but if a man wishes to raise a vigorous family (and we know of nothing more desirable) he will much sooner seek a home in Minesota than in Texas. There is, however, abundant room, as yet, this side of that territory. Northwestern Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin should first be settled."

THE GREAT SUSPENSION CHAIN BRIDGE.—This structure near the Falls of Niagara, 700 feet long, 200 feet above the river, to afford a continuous route from Michigan by the Great Western railroad in Canada West, is now surveyed, and about to be commenced. It will unite with the Buffalo and Albany railway.

The time at present occupied in reaching Buffalo from Detroit is from thirty-six to forty-four hours; by the proposed route the same distance can be accomplished in ten hours, and probably in eight hours.

Proposals have been made to erect a suspension bridge capable of sustaining five hundred tons, to be completed by the fall of 1848, at a cost of $200,000; add $25,000 for buildings, &c connected with the bridge—making a total of $225,000.

It is estimated that 500,000 passengers from the West land at Buffalo during the season of lake navigation; allowing only one-fifth of those to come by the railway, and the same number to return, would give the bridge, at 12½ cents each passenger—

A revenue of	$25,000
100,000 visiters annually at the falls is	12,500
Merchandise freight, suppose	12,500
	$50,000

Equal to 22½ per cent. on outlay.

When it is considered that the population of the great West doubles every ten years, and that the proposed route will be open all the year, what may be expected from an investment in the stock may be estimated by all who have any knowledge of the proposed line.

Other lines of railroad are in contemplation, intended to pass over the proposed bridge.—*Com. Advertiser.*

WHEN A MAN BECOMES OF AGE.—Chancellor KENT has decided that a man becomes of age the day previous to the anniversary of his birthday; so that a person born on the second of April attains his majority on the first.